

April 1959

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LABOUR ORGANISER

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LONDON, S.W.1.

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

EDITOR: A. L. WILLIAMS

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APRIL 1959

PRICE FIVEPENCE

Norfolk Points the Way

NOW the Press treats by-election results has been commented upon in the *Labour Organiser* on several occasions. When in Tory stronghold East Aberdeenshire the Tory was returned with 825 fewer votes than his Labour and Liberal opponents' votes, the *Times* headline read: "Conservative in at E. Aberdeen. Majority of 8 over Labour." When Labour won Pontypool with a majority of 100 over both Tory and Welsh Nationalist, *The Times*' readers were told "Labour Majority Reduced". By magical magic the Labour victory in Rochdale was transformed into a Tory victory and almost a Labour defeat.

The purpose of such treatment is to create the myth of Tory invincibility, and it must be confessed that it has had some success. Witness the resolution on the agenda of the 1958 Labour Party conference expressing concern at Labour's showing in the by-elections, ignoring the four seats won by the Labour Party in the previous eighteen months. The electors must think that if Labour cannot win the next General Election there is not much point in fighting against the Tories, and this may be a factor behind the large proportion of 'Don't Knows' in recent public opinion polls.

That the Tories can be beaten has been made abundantly clear by S.W. Norfolk, a result which failed to make the main news page of *The Times*. The by-election provided a heaven-sent opportunity for the Tories. The

seat had been taken from them by Sydney Dye in 1955 by a majority of only 193. They expected to win, but they left nothing to chance. In no other by-election have Tory officials and agents been so thick on the ground.

It is true that the intervention of a 'National' candidate was an embarrassment, but he did provide an alibi in the unlikely event of defeat. But the unlikely happened and, as the Labour candidate had an absolute majority over his two opponents, the alibi could not be used. Whatever the Press may, or may not, say about South West Norfolk, Labour supporters should see in the result a promise of future success, even if they have been misled by previous by-election results.

In the report of the Wilson Committee there are listed 66 constituencies which were regarded as winnable. There have been by-elections in only two of these and both were won. The other two by-election victories were not even listed! At the General Election, Labour must win 35 more seats to have an absolute majority of two. A few of the seats now held by slender majorities may be lost, but in the 64 winnable seats there are enough not only to make good any losses, but also enough to ensure a substantial majority, since every additional gain means two more to the majority.

It would be foolish to imagine that a Labour victory is inevitable, but unless our supporters believe that it is possible, we shall not win. There is every reason for such a belief. The

(continued on page 68)

QUAIR'S PAGE

THE small schoolkid (no doubt you were told this one years ago, as I was) bravely faced the Great Big Teacher, and did the best he could. He stuttered that a "parable" was "a heavenly story with no earthly meaning". What follows is no parable. It is, in fact, a commonplace and earthly plain and circumstantial narrative of an incident that happened on Tuesday, 10th March, last. It is only told because it seems to convey a lesson: maybe for our more austere readers there is a *moral* in it. So let's get on with it.

At 1.15 p.m. precisely the front-door bell rang. Hastily mopping my lips with my table-napkin I strode to the door and opened it. There was no one there. Looking to the right and to the left, no person was in sight.

Relieving my irritation by emitting a little *sotto voce* profanity, I returned to the table. No sooner had I conveyed to my mouth another portion of stewed neck of lamb, to which I am partial, than the bell rang again. Again, and this time expressing my annoyance audibly, I went to the door. No one was there, but this time as I looked around I detected a female person, with some papers in her hand and crowned with a dusty-pink hat, standing at the front of next-door. I called to her, "What is it you want?"

SHE ignored my existence, and again I returned to the table, and by this time my frugal lunch of stew was practically cold. You, if you have ever had a similar experience, will understand my feelings and forgive me that I voiced them somewhat forcibly.

A few minutes later we heard the clatter of her spiked heels on the asphalt as she walked down the pathway to the pavement. Milady threw up the lower sash of the window and called to her, "Did you want us?" Looking back with a disdainful air, she retorted, "I've got all I want. I'm just checking the directory."

It is, I declare, a matter of complete indifference to me whether my name and address appear in one directory, in ten thousand, or in none at all. They are entered in the telephone directory, and

Cautionary Tale For Canvassers

no doubt the police will know where come when I am to be picked up.

THE crucial point is this—even if the stupid canvasser knew no better than to be pestering people in the lunch-hour it is amazing that her employers have failed to instruct her better in the tactful performance of her work.

And at this stage this Page becomes deadly serious. For a month to come thousands of students of the *Labour Organiser*, and thousands of lesser breed under their guidance, will be exceeding busy canvassing in the local election. This task, the very essence of successful electioneering, for which there is no effective substitute, can be done morning, afternoon or evening. Whatever time of day, it will not be the most convenient time for all the people we call upon, whether women or men.

It is, for example, the height of unwise wisdom to try your arts of persuasion on the harassed housewife who is obviously on the point of setting out with not enough money in her purse to do today's shopping, or who has at the moment three saucepans on top of the stove and something inside the oven. You may lose the possibility of winning a vote by hindering such people.

SO, when canvassing, always be wary and keep nobody at the door longer than they will willingly stay. Even then you should be the one to break it up and get on quickly and smilingly to the rest of your clients. And particularly step lightly in the evenings at the time of the most popular television programme whatever they may be.

But above all, shun the recognised feeding times as the devil does his water. Feed yourself then, if you must. Don't interrupt other who are feeding. Stop and think how difficult it is for a fellow to answer you through a mouthful of dry corn flakes.

CLEANING UP THAT REGISTER

In the March issue of the *Labour Organiser* attention was drawn by Bill Gray, Agent, Faversham constituency, to some of the problems—and anomalies—of electoral registration and of postal voting.

He wisely prefaced his comments on postal voting by accepting the fact that our own parties are largely to blame for failing to ensure the inclusion of qualified Labour electors in the list of Absent Voters, and directed his criticisms to some of the 'loopholes' in the existing arrangements.

As it is unlikely that any changes will be made for some time, we should meanwhile try to minimise the extent and effect of these problems.

Dealing with sickness and incapacity claims (R.P.F.7), Bill suggests that "fairly often" the Electoral Registration Officer classifies these claims as permanent ones because the length of incapacity has not been clearly indicated by the doctor.

I thought this might have been a crack at the reputedly low standard of literacy in the medical profession, but on looking again at the certificate Form R.P.F.7, this can hardly be the case.

All that the doctor has to do is to write a figure and/or delete one word. That does not leave much scope for ambiguity! If, on the other hand, the doctor has left that line blank, then the form has not been properly completed, and the Registration Officer should not accept the claim until this has been done.

Cancel Application

In any case, an elector can cancel his application to be treated as an absent voter, so that would also solve this problem, and that of the elector whose changed occupation made him no longer eligible to claim.

Moreover, the Electoral Registration Officer may notify electors of his intention to remove them from the

Last month Mr. Bill Gray made suggestions for improving electoral registration generally, and particularly in the case of Service and Postal Voters. The National Agent's Technical Assistant here submits these suggestions to a close scrutiny.

Absent Voters' List and, while there is no provision in present legislation for official objections to electors being included in the Absent Voters' List, most Electoral Registration Officers would query any doubtful cases to which attention is drawn.

Unfortunately, it is true that there is no provision to continue the Absent Vote qualification of incapacity claims when the elector moves. A proposal to include reference to this on the form A has been mooted, but until that happens, our canvass and marked register records can do much to ensure that such electors are followed up.

A number of problems arise regarding absent voters in hospitals, and representations have been made to define more clearly the responsibilities of hospital staffs in dealing with these problems. Little has been achieved at national level except that general instructions on Postal Vote facilities are sent to hospitals.

Something could be done, however, locally by Hospital Management Committees, who could delegate responsibilities to the almoner or some other officer, and these responsibilities could include the forwarding of correspondence to discharged patients. One would have thought, in any case, that electors in this position would ask for this to be done.

With the exception of the instance of the embarrassed maiden lady, we,

too, have encountered cases similar to those outlined in Bill Gray's article about Service voters who remain registered at addresses long after their families have moved.

The procedure for registering the Services vote is clearly laid down, but it is unfortunately true that the machine works far from perfectly. Even so, a Parliamentary question disclosed that 75 per cent of eligible personnel were registered at the 1951 election.

With the end of National Service in sight, the work of the Central Records Office may well be lightened. My military adviser tells me that the Government's intention is to maintain in the Regular Services some 350,000 men and women. The shortest 'signing on' period will be 4-6 years (each Service varies) and it is anticipated that a high proportion will serve for longer periods. So the job of the Central Records Office should be easier than it has been in recent years.

Regular Forces

The suggestion that Services personnel should be included on the family household form may have been a good one for National Servicemen whose absence from home was for a limited period, and who, by reason of their age group, would be mostly single men; but in the Regular Forces there would obviously be a much higher proportion of married men—some in married quarters at Service establishments—others in private billets—but most of them subject to fairly frequent posting from one area to another. Any major change in the method of registration of Service personnel would need very careful consideration.

The Merchant Seaman is indeed a special class, for it is true that he is denied the alternative facility granted to Service voters to vote in person instead of by proxy. On the other hand, the Merchant Seaman has the advantage of being included on the annual household form and, providing

the initials 'M.S.' have been placed against his name in the form A, the Electoral Registration Officer required to send him a form R.P.F.2, which enables the Merchant Seaman to appoint a proxy.

Incidentally, there is no provision at all for including the letters 'M.S.' in the Register of Electors, though at one time it was the practice of some Electoral Registration Officers to do this.

(continued on page 75)

CANDIDATES

THE following were endorsed as prospective Parliamentary candidates by the National Executive Committee recently :

High Peak	...	Mr. B. Conlan
Twickenham	...	Mrs. A. P. Clark
Dunfermline	Burghs	Dr. A. Thompson
Exeter	...	Mr. A. J. Rogers
Barking	...	Mr. T. E. N. Dribe
Portsmouth South		Mr. F. Towell
Morecambe & Lonsdale		Mr. F. R. McMan
Crosby	...	Mr. D. E. Brown
Grimsby	...	Mr. C. A. R. Crosland
Wandsworth, Streatham		Dr. D. L. Kerr
Kingston-on-Thames		Mr. T. Braddock
Merton & Morden		Mr. R. W. Kerr
Hove	...	Mr. T. J. Marsh
Solihull	...	Mr. E. J. Bowen
Thirsk & Malton		Mr. J. W. Bray
Hemsworth	...	Mr. A. Beaney
Galloway	...	Mr. W. Cross
Glasgow, Hillhead		Mr. T. B. Duncan



WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURE

South Beds.	...	Miss E. Littlejohn
Manchester, Moss Side		Mr. F. I. Hartley
Peterborough	...	Mr. P. Hopwood
Rye	...	Mr. R. Balch
Denbigh	...	Mr. R. Lewis

Scottish Money Raising Effort

JUST over a year ago a small group of Party members in Edinburgh felt that it was high time a degree of co-operation and co-ordination was injected into the raising of funds by prize draws.

Hitherto, each constituency had gone its own way, resulting in small profits and large overheads. Often Labour Party prize draws were organised in the face of strong competition from Trade Union ventures. A circular was sent to most of the Labour, Co-operative and Trade Union Committees in the area and eventually, after a successful meeting of delegates in April, the 'Lothians and Borders Labour Movement Enterprise Committee' was established.

★

There was opposition. But gradually, hard work, the Executive of 'LABEC', the committee came to be called, produced its first prize draw. That the prizes totalled over £100 was an indication of the ambitions in force.

The draw, timed to be completed prior to the local summer trades holidays, totalled over £500, which was shared out to affiliated organisations according to their contribution. One feature which attracted a deal of favourable comment was the sending out of a complete list of names to every person who had sold a book of tickets. This was managed within two days of the draw.

The running of a Christmas sweep was a matter of course. This time almost £100 was forthcoming and over one hundred supporters, including local M.P.s and prospective candidates, attended the nomination.

Cases of individual enthusiasm were noted, especially the Kelso Party member who topped all others by selling £20 of penny tickets—a wonderful effort.

★

In March, 1959, saw 'LABEC's' first annual meeting. Now, seven Constituency Labour Parties, eight Ward Labour Parties, 22 Trade Union Branches have joined this fast-growing, non-profit-making federation. Recent recruits welcomed the A.G.M. were Berwick and East Lothian C.L.P. and representatives on behalf of all the Edinburgh E.T.U. Branches.

Plans for the Summer Holiday Draw are well in hand, the Executive members

being now well-known for their efficiency, and it is confidently expected that the legal maximum of £750 will be reached.

The City Labour Party and the Edinburgh and District Trades Council have blessed the federation, while the comprehensive constitution of 'LABEC' ensures that no proscribed or otherwise unworthy elements can assume control.

★

To some Party members in highly organised English constituencies the successes of the committee might not seem impressive. But to supporters in the south-east of Scotland, where in the past there have been C.L.P.s extremely satisfied with the raising of £20 or £30, the results of 'LABEC' are worth shouting about.

If all goes well, the committee expect to enter the weekly football sweep business next season, and there are tentative plans for a winter whist tournament. The pioneers of last year feel certain that 'LABEC' is here to stay.

J. Brunton

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FOR HIRING

LABOUR HALL

ARE your party's premises being used for illegal purposes? Your immediate reaction may be — "What an (odd) (absurd) (insulting) — or (blooming soft) sort of question". But are you quite sure that, however unwittingly, you are not breaking the law?

Recently, one of our parties had something of a shock when they found themselves prosecuted under the Betting and Lotteries Act, 1934, for permitting their premises to be used for the conduct of a lottery (tombola drives in this instance).

For many years it had been the custom of this party to let out their hall on hire to an individual who ran regular whist drives. In more recent times these lost ground in favour of the tombola craze, and so the promoter changed over.

It transpired that the police kept watch on the building and eventually closed the drives down.

The constituency agent was visited by a senior police officer, who informed him that the party, as owners of the premises, were liable to prosecution for permitting these competitions to take place.

The names and addresses of members of the General Committee were taken by the police, but subsequently only the agent appeared in the magistrates' court to answer the summons. The case was found proved and a fine of £30 was imposed.

However—all's well that ends well, and you will be glad to know that this party are now successfully running weekly tombola drives themselves, and are unlikely to have any further trouble providing they continue to observe the requirements of Section 4 of the Small Lotteries and Gaming Act, 1956.

Much has previously been written in these columns about the operation of this Act, and most parties now appear to be aware of its requirements.

The point now being emphasised is that, in addition to the offence committed by the person or persons running such competitions for private gain, it is also an offence for the owners of premises to permit such events to be held.

So if whist drives, tombola, or similar functions are taking place in your premises, make sure that they are being organised by *bona fide* organisations, and that the requirements of Section 4 of the Small Lotteries and Gaming Act, 1956, are being observed.

(continued from page 63)

Leadership issue, which bedevilled the past two General Elections, has been settled, three years of policy making has produced a programme which has united the Party and which faces squarely the great problems of the day, publicity and organisation have both been greatly improved.

What is needed now is a demonstration of the will to victory by our active workers. The 'Into Action' campaign must be intensified to a degree that will banish defeatism among even the most apathetic supporters.

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en More Agency Appointments

HE following Agency appointments have been approved by the National Executive Committee recently:

MR. H. M. DAVIES to **Stoke South**. Harold Davies, aged 45, a road transport worker, has been a member of the Party for 11 years. For the past 4½ years he has been assistant to the Stoke South full-time agent, George Parton, who retired at the end of March last.

MR. D. W. DINES to **Clapham**. A trade union clerk, 32 years of age, David Dines fills the vacancy in the Clapham constituency caused by the resignation of Mr. Bransom. He has held a number of party offices, including that of secretary of the Mitcham Constituency Labour Party.

MR. D. GILLESPIE to **S.E. Derbys**. A member of the Party for 23 years, Daniel Gillespie recently completed the Agents' Training Course. He has held various local party offices in Scotland and London. Age 39, he is by trade a mining engineer.

MR. W. GOBIN to **Stockton**. An underground colliery official, William Gobin is 49 years of age and has been a member of the Party at Bedlington for years.

MR. D. F. HOWE to **Central Norfolk**. For the past 5½ years Douglas Howe has been the full-time agent at Bedford. He has been in control of the 1955 election in this constituency. 39 years of age, he has been a member of the Party for more than 10 years.

MR. P. A. JOLLY to **Totnes**. Pat Jolly, a native of Plymouth, returns to Devon West country after two years as a full-time organiser in the employ of Birmingham Borough Labour Party. He has assisted at a number of Parliamentary elections and was responsible for transport and transport at Warwick & Birmingham by-election in March 1957.

MR. P. A. JONES to **Ipswich**. A former railway clerk, recently a student in Canada on a trade union scholarship, Jones is 27 years of age. As a member of N.A.L.S.O. he took part in the 1955 and 1957 summer canvass campaigns in the Eastern region. He has recently completed the Agents' Training Course.

MR. G. KING to **Stroud**. Gordon King is 21. On completing his national service in the Army joined the Agents' Training Course. A member of the Devizes party for 2½ years before joining the Forces, he was secretary of the Marlborough League of Youth.

MR. R. TREWICK to **Keighley**. Bob Trewick also recently completed the Agents' Training Course. A Co-op employee in Durham, he has been an active worker in the Newcastle area during his eight years membership of the Party. He is 24 years of age.

MISS R. W. WEST to **Buckingham** as Assistant Agent. Ruth West, aged 22 is a metal machinist and member of the E.T.U. A member of the Party at Wellingborough for the past three years, she has held various local offices, including that of Youth Section secretary.

Situations Vacant

BEDFORD C.L.P. invites applications for the post of full-time Secretary/Agent. The appointment to be made in consultation with the National Executive Committee. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms can be obtained from the National Agent, The Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1, to whom they should be returned not later than 28th April, 1959.

THE LABOUR PARTY REQUIRES AN ORGANISING ASSISTANT FOR THE MANCHESTER DISTRICT. Application forms and conditions of appointment are obtainable from the National Agent, The Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1. Application forms must be returned to the National Agent not later than 2nd May, 1959.

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Are You P.V. Conscious?

I—WHO CAN HAVE A POSTAL VOTE

THE inclusion on the Absent Voters' List of every Labour supporter eligible to vote by post should be the aim of every party. To do this we shall need the co-operation and help of all our members.

Our first job, therefore, is to make our members and supporters 'postal vote conscious' and this can best be achieved by frequent reminders of the wide scope of the postal vote. The majority of potential civilian postal voters fall into one of the following three main groups:

Those in England and Wales who have removed outside the borough, urban district or rural parish in which they were registered as electors (burgh or district in Scotland). Claim Form R.P.F.8. For Parliamentary elections only;

Those whose work may prevent them from going to the polling station themselves, and

Those who, because of permanent or temporary illness or incapacity, may be prevented from voting at the polling station. Claim Form R.P.F.7, for Parliamentary and local government elections (except Rural District and Parish elections in England and Wales).

If anyone thinks that only a small number of supporters would be included in those three groups, they should be reminded of the heavy calls made on our cars at previous elections; the time spent taking semi-invalids to the poll; chasing from one parish to another for removals in county constituencies, and the many other frantic journeys which might well have been unnecessary.

Brief reflection will show that many of these trips could have been avoided, and the cars used much more profit-

ably. This aspect alone, apart from the need to poll every vote, should be sufficient to stimulate the interest of Party workers in the postal vote. It is estimated that an average of four in every hundred electors are eligible to vote by post, though this number will vary according to the 'age' of the Register of Electors and the nature of the constituency.

Growing Older

The Register is already eighteen weeks old when it is published on 15th February, for the qualifying date was the previous 10th October. Each week numbers of people will change their address, and join the ever-growing group of 'removals'.

In the borough constituencies only those who have moved outside the borough will be eligible to claim a postal vote for removal, but in the county constituencies electors who move from one town or parish to another (burgh or district in Scotland)—still in the same constituency—will also be eligible.

Removals of this nature are considerable, for, amongst other reasons, the rural district council's housing estates are usually spread over several parishes.

Thus the potential postal vote is usually higher in the county constituencies, and as transport is often a great problem there, the importance of tracing removals and registering claims before the election must be even more obvious.

The second group—those claiming the postal vote in respect of their work—may be equally large in any type of constituency. It covers more people than is sometimes realised.

The long-distance lorry and truck crews, car-delivery drivers and commercial travellers come easily to mind, but there are others who may only be away at irregular intervals.

There are building-trade workers, erectors and others employed by contractors; installation and maintenance engineers (the latter often called out in an emergency); furniture removal men and many others.

In some cases, even where regularly employed at the same place, long duty shifts or the combined working plus travelling time may prevent their getting to the polling station. Here, too, postal vote claim might be justified. The sick and disabled form the third group, and they are classified as being either permanently or temporarily incapacitated. To be permanently incapacitated does not necessarily mean being bed-ridden or always confined to the house.

Recurring Bouts

Many elderly — and other — people have recurring bouts of a complaint which vary in severity or frequency. They cannot anticipate what their condition will be on polling day, they would be justified in claiming postal vote on grounds of permanent incapacity.

Others, whose ill-health or incapacity is of a temporary nature, may claim a postal vote for a limited period. They will be those ill at home or in hospital, or temporarily handicapped by an accident, and those who may be waiting to enter hospital (including expectant mothers).

'Border-line' cases should be looked at carefully. The provisions refer to the elector being able to 'vote unaided'. This could apply to many electors in indifferent health who might be capable of walking a short distance to a polling station, but quite incapable of doing so if it were a mile or more away.

A doctor's certificate is needed for all sickness and incapacity claims — but more on this later.

There you have the three groups who make up that four per cent of the electors whose votes will only be obtained by some special effort, and in most cases that effort will have to be made for them. Don't chance waiting till the election to make that effort; start now! It will be easier, and more thorough.

-Are You P.V. Conscious?

HOW TO TACKLE THE JOB

THE thought of tackling an electorate of 50,000 or more, or even the 100,000 Labour 'promises' on your marked register, is a formidable one, broken down to ward or polling district committee level, it becomes a manageable job. A start could even be made by collecting and recording information which your own delegates and active members could supply.

A scrutiny of previous election records will probably show those electors who needed transport — and those reporters who failed to vote. A selective canvass on those alone should yield a good number of claims.

Get out to make all your members 'postal vote observers'. But don't

baffle them all with the various official claims forms. Print or duplicate supplies of a simple form:

"I think that (Mrs. Jones) of
(31 Acacia Avenue, Oaklands
(Present address)

Estate) may be entitled to vote by
post because of (work) (incapacity)
(removal). The previous address was

.....
(For removals only)

Members could hand the forms to their collector or local secretary, and the information be acted upon by them. Such forms could also be used when canvassing is taking place.

In nearly every party there will be some members who would be able to

give particular help in this work by reason of their job or other interests. The postman, the insurance agent, the delivery-man, and others whose jobs bring them into contact with so many people; or the social worker who helps at old folks' clubs or homes, or at a local clinic or welfare centre.

They may be too busy to follow up each claim, but the basic information, on the little form outlined above, could be followed up by others.

This following-up takes time, as well as requiring some knowledge of the procedure involved. That is why it is important for every ward or polling district committee to have a postal vote officer who will give special attention to this work, and why every constituency should see that these appointments are made, and that training is given to key-workers.

Calling List

Those little slips handed in by the members and canvassers will form the basis of the calling list for our postal vote officer or canvasser, who will now only have to call on those who appear to qualify for postal voting. Not such a formidable task after all! What will these calls involve? Let us look first at removals.

Removals will be both outward and inward, and when electors have only moved from one address to another in the same borough, urban district or rural parish (burgh or district in Scotland), they will not be entitled to a postal vote. But our postal vote officer will not have wasted his time.

It is important that details of such removals are recorded centrally, so that literature and polling details can be sent during the election. Otherwise, many of these electors will mistakenly think they have no vote. But those other removals, who have moved from one local government area or rural parish to another (and it may only be a mile down the road), will be entitled to vote by post.

Inward removals will be easy to find,

and when you know them as supporters forms can be filled in.

Some supporters may have come from other constituencies, maybe marginal ones. Their claims are important too. They do not know the address to which the claims should go, our secretaries should forward them to the Regional Office of the Labour Party. In this way our parties can help each other.

Removed Out

Those who have moved out, however, may not be so easy to find, but where they are known to be supporters, effort should be made to trace them. The neighbours may know their address; a neighbour, a trade union branch secretary or a local roundsman may be helpful; the details might be obtained from the housing allocation lists, or other sources.

Where supporters have moved some distance away, it will be necessary to write to them, explaining their position and enclosing the R.P.F.8 claim form. A supply of such letters could be duplicated.

It is worth including a stamped addressed envelope for the return of the forms to your party, rather than asking electors to post the forms direct to the Registration Officer. In this way, you will know for certain that the claims have been made.

Little difficulty should be experienced in contacting those who might be eligible for postal voting because of their work. It is important that claimants describe their job as fully as possible in the limited space on the Form R.P.F.7.

For instance, 'Lorry Driver' may not be sufficient to satisfy the Registration Officer, but 'Long Distance Driver' is more informative; 'Carpenter' or 'Structural Erector' would need amplifying by words such as—'with site-contractor' or 'at distant sites'.

Making Sure

Try to get the forms completed in your presence, or arrange to call back on them. As mentioned previously, this ensures that the claims are made, and added to your central records.

As well as making these personal calls, efforts should be made at constituency level to stimulate the interest and action of trade union branches having members likely to be affected.

This is best done by personal contact with the branch officers, who should

vided with supplies of postal vote
lets and claims forms. Visits to branch
tings might bring further results.

he effort involved in registering these
ms is very worth-while, for, providing
nature of employment does not
age, these claimants will remain on
absent voters' lists so long as they are
the register of electors.

he claim forms for those who are ill
firm are not complete until the doc-
has signed the certificate which is on
right-hand half of the form. It will
n be desirable for our postal vote
er or canvasser to get this done, for
elderly person may hesitate to trouble
doctor—the antipathy to form-filling
g pretty general!

here are several ways of doing this.
ome instances, especially in smaller
munities, the doctor will readily iden-
the names on a batch of forms taken
him by a party member who is also
wn to him.

er other circumstances it might be
er to write a brief letter on behalf of
claimant, sending the form to the
or, and requesting its return in a
aped addressed envelope. You could
call on the elector later to collect it.
his may sound more complicated than
ng the doctor to post it direct to the
istration Officer, but, again, it will
sure you that the claim has been
e, and the details can be added to
r records.

Blind Persons

t this point, mention should be made
ne Blind, who also are entitled to vote
post. Blind electors registered with
local authority merely fill in the name
he council registered with. If a blind
on is not so registered the certificate
t be completed by a doctor.

must be remembered that a blind
on may be assisted to vote at the
ing station. Some may wish to con-
e to take advantage of this facility,
it is unwise to press such blind per-
to register for the postal vote.

he work of registering these perma-
claims should be a regular feature
postal vote work. Once registered they
remain on the Absent Voters' List
nitely, so the initial effort is well
hwhile.

y dealing with them before the
ion commences, you will then have

time to deal with the temporary illness
and incapacity claims, which will need to
be completed quickly.

Having succeeded in registering these
supporters as postal voters, they now have
the opportunity of voting, and will not
need attention from our workers on
polling day. But if we are to make sure
they use their postal vote, it will be wise
to pay attention to them before polling
day.

Dispatch Literature

The agent should ensure that an
election address and other literature is
despatched to each postal voter at the
address shown on the list provided by
the Returning Officer. Every effort should
be made to see that voters receive the
candidate's address by the time the postal
ballot papers arrive. (The agent will have
been notified when these are being
issued.)

It would also be desirable for local
canvassers to call on them about the
same time, for some postal voters may
welcome assistance in following out the
instructions relating to the postal ballot
papers.

That some voters do need assistance is
evidenced by the number of invalidated
postal votes at nearly every election;
usually because the identity declaration
was not returned; came back without the
signature of the witness; or was included
in the smaller envelope which should
only contain the ballot paper.

The illustrated leaflet, 'Your Postal
Vote Ballot Paper', published by Head
Office, shows clearly and simply what is
required.

Some voters' reluctance to vote by post
may be due to their doubts as to the
secrecy of the ballot. If our canvassers
are clear on the procedure, they can help
to reassure them on this.

★ ★ ★

*It must be remembered that all claims
for inclusion on the Absent Voters' List
at a Parliamentary Election must be in
12 days before polling day (to which must
be added Sundays and public holidays).
In practice this means at least a fortnight
before polling day.*

*In local elections there is no postal vote
for removals. Employment and sickness
claims have to be in not later than the
last day for nominations, which will be
well over a fortnight before polling day.*

COVENTRY VOTERS ON THE MOVE

MR. R. RITCHIE, full-time Secretary of the Coventry Borough Labour Party, realised a few months ago that a substantial shift of population was taking place in the city which could imperil two Labour-held marginals at the coming election.

In 1955, the South constituency was held by a majority of 1,688 and the North constituency by 3,173. The new estates are mainly in the more strongly-held East constituency, and are re-housing many people from the old central areas of the two marginals who are predominantly Labour supporters.

Bob Ritchie believed that a careful check on corporation removals would be invaluable in helping to trace electors. So the Borough Labour Party decided to employ a young married woman full-time, on a temporary basis, to concentrate on this work. The appointment commenced in January and already much valuable information has been secured.

For the removals during October and November the procedure adopted was to check if the elector was (a) qualified at the old address, or (b) removed by inclusion in the 'C' List, or (c) included as a new elector on the 'B' List.

This breakdown gave information as to whether the elector—

- (a) is still qualified at the old address, or
- (b) is now qualified at the new address, or
- (c) has no current qualifications whatever, or
- (d) is qualified for a postal vote by residence at a new address outside the city, or
- (e) is qualified at both addresses (14 electors in this category have so far been traced).

From December it is only necessary to check if the elector is still qualified

at the old address because of the October qualifying date.

The information of persons qualified at the old address is being recorded on lists, a separate one for each ward—each elector being placed on the ward list covering his address. Headings of the lists are given below.

This work is now giving the borough party office details respecting removals in corporation tenancies as to where electors are now living and where they have to vote.

Next Step

The next step is to undertake further breakdown, and lists will be made up in order of the new addresses—these will be passed to the ward parties concerned for them to canvass the electors at the new addresses.

When these canvass lists are returned all Labour promises will be extracted and a third and final list will be prepared of these promises only. These will be grouped as conveniently as possible for car transport to the corporation polling stations; for example, efforts will be made to list together, say, five or five electors living in close proximity who will have to vote at a particular station in one of the other marginal constituencies.

For the first four months, October to January, new tenancies, transfers and exchanges involved 1,064 families and 2,057 electors. The work has so far produced 1,209 electors who, subject to being Labour 'promises', will need transport on polling day.

Five hundred and six electors have to be moved to the South constituency to vote, 211 to the North, 492 to the East. Another 119 electors have moved into tenancies from outside the city. These will be canvassed, and, if Labour supporters, they will

Name	Constituency	Number of voters	New Address	Polling District	Old Address	Polling District	Polling Station
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to complete a postal vote application for their old constituency—it to be kept in mind that three other marginals adjoin the city boundaries. View of the nature of the development now taking place, and should the action be delayed until the autumn, it is clear the problem is going to be a greater than was foreseen. The monthly average is running at 350 electors still qualified at the old address and for an October election will give a further 3,000 to be added to the 1,209 already traced. With tracing during the summer months most certain to be at a faster rate, the figure may well reach 5,000.

It is estimated that 4,000 of the 5,000 electors are likely to be Labour voters, that something like 3,000 of these will be electors qualified in North or South constituencies who have been traced in the East constituency. With this number split between the marginals, it could well represent the difference between victory and defeat in these two important constituencies.

Polling Day

The problem now to be surmounted is whether it is practicable to attempt to trace such a large number of electors on polling day. This is being given the most serious consideration, for it is certain that many of these electors would make the journey on their own—to return to the polling stations will require a journey of from five to ten miles across the city with a 1s. 6d. or 2s. return bus

journey is surmounting with great difficulty the gathering of information on the electors, and is undertaking the necessary breakdown of records. It now has to put out a sound scheme for polling day transport.

The work is on municipal tenancies and the number of private house electors may be somewhat equal but the tracing of these is much more difficult and requires different methods.

Another fact has come to light. No more than 550 of the first 2,057 electors traced are actually disfranchised! Many are not qualified at either the old or the new address. In the first months

the figures are 118, 138, 176, and 118.

This is appalling, for at this monthly average by October there will be no less than 1,600 electors who will be without a vote and the majority will be Labour supporters. This is for municipal tenancies only!

The reason may be that a man and wife have been living in rooms or lodgings at the old address and their landlord has failed to include their names on Form A on the qualifying date.

Bob Ritchie comments it might be worth while to have a test prosecution for failure to comply with the legal requirements to complete the Form.

H. R. UNDERHILL

(continued from page 66)

The suggestion that the B and C Lists should be replaced by the publication of a draft Register is not a new one. Considerable thought has been given to this idea, for at first sight it seems a good one.

Although this method would probably cost less, it is considered to be less effective than the existing arrangements. Bill Gray admits the usefulness of the B and C Lists to agents, but suggests that the public do not understand them, and that "the public should count".

Of course the public should count, but how many electors do take steps to check their inclusion on the Register? I'll wager that more claims come through the efforts of agents and canvassers than from electors acting on their own initiative.

The present method is undoubtedly the best for "the initiated", and it is their efforts which best serve the public in this respect. Incidentally, the Electoral Registration Officers make minor corrections to electors' names and addresses without recourse to the B and C Lists.

The compilation of accurate Registers covering some 35,000,000 electors is a big job, and is one that requires the co-operation of the electors, the political parties, the Electoral Registration Officers and their staffs.

Bert Williams

SIXTEEN NEW LABOUR MEMBERS

by S. E. Barker

THE First Register of Electors published under the Representation of the People Act, 1918, contained approximately twenty-one million names. The women electors, enfranchised for the first time, numbered about eight million, and the naval and military voters were estimated at between three and four million.

The Government was determined to rush the election, despite the fact that the new Registers were incomplete. Consequently, thousands of electors both at home and abroad were disfranchised. Both the scheme providing for the proxy and postal votes failed miserably, and thousands of serving men still abroad failed to receive either the candidates' election addresses or the ballot papers. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising to find that only 59 per cent of the electors voted.

Ever since the special Conferences held in February, 1918, the Labour Party had been preparing for the General Election. Local parties were encouraged to make careful electoral preparations and raise the necessary finances. Head Office was at the same time encouraging affiliated organisations to sponsor Parliamentary candidatures.

361 CANDIDATES

By the time the General Election came there were 361 Labour candidates in the field as against 78 in the 1910 January Election and 56 in the General Election which took place in December of that year.

The 1918 list included four women: Mrs. Despard (Battersea North), Mrs. Pethwick Lawrence (Manchester Rusholme), Miss Mary MacArthur (Stourbridge), and Mrs. Mackenzie (Welsh Universities). Six university seats were contested and Sydney Webb was second in the London University contest, being defeated by 669 votes only.

At the opening of Parliament, the Members who had contested seats independent candidates, Sir Owen Thomas (Anglesey), Mr. J. J. Jones (Silvertown), Mr. F. H. Rose (Aldershot North), and Mr. A. E. Waters, who had won the Kettering division as a Co-operative candidate, were admitted into the Parliamentary Labour Party and received the Whip. The Party made a total of 61 members of the Parliamentary Labour Party, an increase of only 19 over the 1910 Parliament.

GOOD RESULT

Considering the shocking state of the Register, the number of Tory and Liberal candidates who, under the guise of the Coalition Government, accepted the 'coupon', and the money which was spent by the old political parties, Labour had done very well indeed.

Of the successful Labour candidates 25 were sponsored by the Mine Federation of Great Britain, 24 by other Trade Unions, 3 by the Independent Labour Party, and 5 by local Labour Parties.

Out of a total electorate of 21,370,300 electors, 10,808,003 voted and 2,244,900 voted Labour.

The Party's General Election manifesto, 'Labour's Call to The People', contained the following items: 'Programme of Reconciliation', 'Hands Off Democracy', 'Freedom for Ireland', 'Conscription', 'The Land For The Workers', 'A Million Good Houses', 'A Levy On Capital', 'Industrial Democracy', and 'The Real Women's Party'.

As in every General Election, weaknesses in organisation were discovered and in his report to Conference, the National Agent, Mr. Arthur Peters, pointed out that before the next General Election, every local party must make an effort to ensure that there was a ward organisation full

ing in every borough and village
ty throughout the country con-
currencies.

Federations of Labour Parties had
n formed in north-east Lancashire
l Cheshire, Wales, Essex, South
ffordshire, Worcestershire and
th Wales. The Scottish Advisory
mmittee was by now well estab-
ed.

The South Wales Federation was
ng excellent work, but was finan-
y embarrassed. The North Wales
ides and Labour Council was
king valiant efforts to assist in a
ilar way, but was being seriously
npered by distances and the
rseely populated areas.

A Welsh Organisation to embrace
whole of Wales was under con-
eration. Mr. Arthur Henderson and
Egerton P. Wake, who had by that
e been appointed Organising Secre-
y of the Party, met the South Wales
our Federation to discuss the
lter.

WELSH PROBLEMS

ubsequently, the Organisation Sub-
mmittee of the National Executive
special consideration to Welsh
blems and an organised tour of the
ole of the Welsh constituencies was
be undertaken by National Officers.
ight million women electors with
y little political experience were to
ignored only at the peril of the
our Party. By now five Women's
rganisers were appointed. Organising
ferences were being held all over
country and the West Riding con-
ference took pride of place having 600
legates in attendance.

A National Conference of Labour
men was held in London in 1918,
the number of delegates present
260. The campaign for the Work-
Women's House started by the
men's Labour League was carried
by the Women's Sections and in
9 arrangements were made for
ers' wives to give evidence before
Coal Industry Commission on
using and Pit-head Baths.

In December, 1918, the National Exe-
cutive Committee decided to join the
Standing Joint Committee of Industrial
Women's Organisations and it appointed
its women members to sit on the Com-
mittee. It also asked this Organisation to
act in an advisory capacity to the
National Executive Committee on
women's questions.

The General Election had proved to the
National Executive Committee that there
was a great need to extend the Agency
Service. Considering all the complications
caused by the unsatisfactory state of the
1918 Register, agents had conducted their
General Election Campaigns extremely
well, but it was felt necessary to intro-
duce a scheme which would encourage
the training of suitable persons for
agency.

It was decided that advertisements
should be inserted in the Labour Press
intimating that the National Executive
Committee proposed to hold half yearly
written examinations of suitable persons
who had previously undertaken home
studies on specifically chosen standard
works dealing with the following subjects:

- (a) Registration — Parliamentary and
Local Government.
- (b) Conduct of Parliamentary Elections
- (c) Conduct of Municipal and other
Elections.
- (d) Organisation.

The scheme required persons to enrol
at Head Office who would then be sup-
plied with full particulars of books to be
studied prior to the examinations which
would be conducted at convenient centres
in the presence of representatives of the
National Executive Committee.

An Examining Board would have
power to issue certificates, and those
holding Certificates of Proficiency in four
subjects would be entitled to use the
prefix C.L.P.A. (Certificated Labour
Party Agent).

POOR PAY

The scheme was adopted by Conference
but not without opposition. Herbert
Heavyside, who became one of York-
shire's best known agents, moved the non-
endorsement of the recommendation
until the economic status of agents was
improved. He was supported by a dele-
gate from a London constituency, who
said that his party was paying the agent
only £3 per week!

Prior to the First World War, Head Office staff had consisted of seven persons only, with the Parliamentary Assistant, two Men Organisers and a Scottish Secretary, making 11 in all. The changes in the Constitution of the Party in 1918 and the adoption of the Policy Document, 'Labour and the New Social Order', had led to tremendous developments, and more staff was appointed.

In addition to the principal officers, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Secretary; Mr. James Middleton, Assistant Secretary; Mr. Arthur Peters, National Agent; Dr. Marion Phillips, Chief Woman Officer, there were now additional Heads of Departments. The indoor and outdoor staff had grown to 47 and the Parliamentary staff now consisted of five persons.

Finance was, however, becoming a problem and it became quite clear that very soon Conference would be asked to increase the affiliation fee once again, and that the National Executive Committee must be relieved of its obligation to make grants to Parliamentary candidates at General Elections.

Labour Newspapers Limited, the Society that published the *Daily Citizen*, was dissolved at a Shareholders' Meeting in London in 1918. Ramsay MacDonald

presided and explained that this would be the last scene in the history of the paper.

He gave a short and sad history of the paper's life and death. Clifford Allan, the liquidator, presented a financial statement and reported on the winding up of the society. He explained how the directors and debenture holders had given him instructions as manager to conduct the paper's finances in such a manner that it could cease publication at a point where all trading liabilities could be met.

Good financial management had resulted in the staff being paid full compensation, the advertisement creditors had received settlements to their entire satisfaction and the debenture holders a portion of their holdings.

The good name of the Labour Movement had been preserved for, tragic as was the loss of our Party's daily newspaper, it had ceased publication and the Society had been dissolved with an untarnished financial reputation.

Finally, what of membership in 1918? Had the General Election helped to gain support? It had. Membership had risen from 2,465,131 in 1918 to 3,013,129. This was the largest increase in a single year since the Party was formed in 1900.

POINTS FROM THE REPORTS

Woolwich Maintains Its Membership

"A total of 1,089 new members were recruited during the year. Members' subscriptions were £2,679 11s. 8d. After deleting 89 deaths, 380 removals and 570 lapses, the total membership at the end of the year was 10,518, a net increase of 50.

"On June 1st, 420 members went by boat from Greenwich Pier to Hampton Court.

"The Floral Fair and Bazaar held at the Town Hall on December 5th and 6th was very successful, financially and socially. All stalls were well stocked and very nicely decorated.

"Income: £1,521 19s. 9d. Expenditure: £296 17s. 5d. Balance Profit: £1,225 2s. 4d."

Annual Report of Woolwich Labour Party.

★ ★ ★

"The campaign was developed and it was aimed at getting *The Future Labour*

Offers You into every household in the constituency. Twenty-five thousand copies were obtained together with 25,000 letters from Percy Wells and 25,000 Campaign Cards to send to every family, to be followed up in due course by a canvasser.

"In addition to this, it was decided to assist the National Executive Committee to bear the cost of the heavy subsidy on the policy booklet by the constituency party bearing a cost of £412.

"Twelve 16 sheet posters have been exhibited throughout the constituency throughout the year.

"A series of newspaper advertisements have been inserted in the local press.

"A constituency party newsletter has appeared monthly, except during April and May when illness prevented publication. This newsletter has been sent to all Party members.

"Copies of the *Labour Organiser* have been distributed to party secretaries and

Executive committee members. About 200
four Party Diaries were sold.

A 1959 Labour Party Calendar was
printed and distributed to all members."

*Annual Report of Faversham
Constituency Labour Party.*

★ ★ ★

The General Election period is now
most upon us and the greatest challenge
we face is to find another 5,000
names for the register. Seventy-eight
per cent of the electors are already
marked and in the small number left the
priority for the Labour candidate must
be found. The postal vote is also a
challenge that must be faced and if every
ward and polling district could find one
man or woman who would make this his
sole responsibility we would be
on the way to succeeding. The
movements—those who are moving from
borough or village—should be con-
sidered as soon as we hear that they are
moving, so that the appropriate form
(F 8) may be completed."

*Annual Report of Dover
Constituency Labour Party.*

★ ★ ★

With all our modern methods, nothing
has yet been found to replace the vital
doorstep work and we have consequently
needed a central canvassing squad which is
now working its way through our
most remote areas. It would be wrong to be
overly optimistic, for we are still a
marginal area, but we are confident that
the election machine is well tuned up
and ready to go 'Into Action' at any time.
Whether the call be for the borough
Council, or the much awaited General
Election."

*Samuel C. Silkin, B.A., Chairman,
Dulwich Constituency Labour Party.*

★ ★ ★

Material for the General Election is
being ordered. The Brighton and District
Co-operative Party are purchasing 65,000
invitation envelopes on our behalf and
will deliver in February so that
canvassing can begin as soon as the 1959
Register of Electors is published. We
have also accepted the Co-operative
Party's offer to print 20,000 introduction
letters for delivery immediately the elec-
tion begins. The agent is discussing the
election Address and other material with
the printer and will report results to the
January 28th meeting of the Election
Committee.

Central Committee Rooms will be
published at 179 Lewes Road and the

Co-operative Party have agreed that 23
Hanover Crescent be also used as a Com-
mittee Room for the preparation of
election addresses for the free post
and, possibly, the central handling of
removals."

*Annual Report of Kemptown
Constituency Labour Party.*

★ ★ ★

"As part of this campaign and as a
preliminary to the coming General
Election, we have booked up and are
using six 16-sheet poster sites through-
out the constituency; this will cost over
a full year about £200. The cost would
be far greater except for the fact that we
are carrying out this campaign in con-
junction with our colleagues in Kent, and
have jointly been able to negotiate
cheaper site and poster costs than we
could do on our own.

"In the normal course of events, you
are expected for fourteen hours in one
day every five years to give of your best.
If on that one day you fail to get out the
maximum Labour vote and fail to hold
this seat for Labour, you will have failed
in all your work, all our deliberations,
meetings, discussions, money raising; all
of our activities will count for nothing at
all if, on this one day, you cannot get
out the Labour vote because you don't
know where it is. There is no short cut,
there is no easy way. The only answer
is to get out on the doorstep, and you
can't do it all in the three weeks of an
election campaign."

*Annual Report of Dartford
Constituency Labour Party.*

★ ★ ★

"We can claim to have played our part
in the first stages of the 'Into Action'
campaign which was launched in early
December. To date over 3,000 copies of
the Policy Statement *The Future Labour
Offers You* have been sold and, in spite
of the bad weather, canvassing has
continued in various areas.

"Even though this constituency is not
officially termed marginal, the increase
by nearly 7,000 in the total electorate
since 1955 makes it far from a foregone
conclusion for either Party. Our task, if
we are to return Chris. Norwood, though
it will be far from an easy one is, how-
ever, simple. That is to ensure that every
Labour supporter records his or her
vote."

*Annual Report of Bromsgrove
Constituency Labour Party.*

PRICES REDUCED !!!

ELECTION ENVELOPES

Can now be supplied from stock at the following reduced prices
9 in. × 4 in.

Under 10,000			17/9
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50,000 — 99,000			15/11
100,000 — 249,000			15/6
250,000 — 499,000			15/-
500,000 and over			14/9

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